

D E A N E  
K E L L E R  
1901 - 1992

AN EXHIBITION  
OF DRAWINGS



THE DRAWINGS  
OF  
DEANE KELLER  
1901 - 1992

AN EXHIBITION IN SUPPORT  
OF THE  
DEANE KELLER SCHOLARSHIP  
IN DRAWING AND ANATOMY

LYME ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS  
OLD LYME, CONNECTICUT  
MARCH 4 - APRIL 3, 1994

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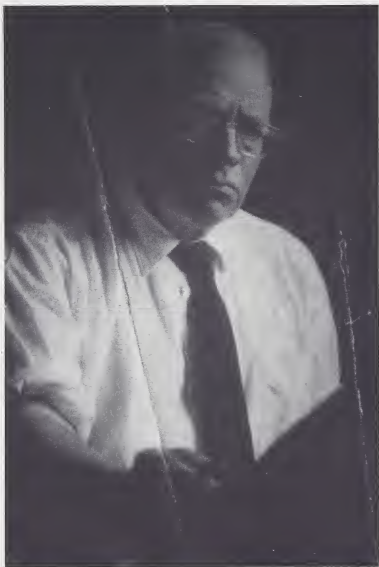
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#### PHOTOGRAPHIC CREDITS

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All proceeds from the sale of work exhibited will become part of the Deane Keller Scholarship Fund.



*DEANE KELLER 1901 - 1992*



## INTRODUCTION

The importance of draftsmanship in the work of a painter has its roots in Renaissance Italy. The work of the draftsman was to resolve the fundamental problems of form, characterization, and design preliminary to the actual painting. Paintings were composed using these working drawings which were so critical to the process, since pictorial decisions were made and rendered and a synthesis achieved through them.

This was the tradition learned and practiced by Deane Keller. From his years as a fellow at the American Academy in Rome to the years which followed as a painter and teacher at Yale, Deane Keller produced over 1200 works noteworthy for their rigorous attention to quality of drawing. His commitment to the art of drawing is evident in the approximately 700 oil portrait commissions, 2 major mural commissions, in the archive of more than 500 working drawings, and in studies too numerous to mention which were done for students over the course of forty-one years of teaching.

For Deane Keller the act of drawing demanded one's best efforts since the integrity of a work, whether drawing or painting, rested heavily, if not entirely, on the quality of draftsmanship evident in the work. Drawing carried with it a sense of the tradition of the great draftsmen of the past. Drawing presented a limitless opportunity to get to the unique truth in a way which was beyond the scope of any other medium of expression.

The Lyme Academy of Fine Arts presents this exhibition of rarely seen working drawings by Deane Keller in order to bring the man and his work to the next generation of students and to the greater community, and to encourage further support for the Deane Keller Scholarship in Drawing and Anatomy inaugurated at the Academy in 1992.





He has always felt that to be a draftsman of real power would be the basic aim of either a painter or a sculptor. This notion never has changed from 1920 to date - 1962. Drawing opens up most of the vistas of great art.





*Drapery study, ca. 1950.  
Charcoal*



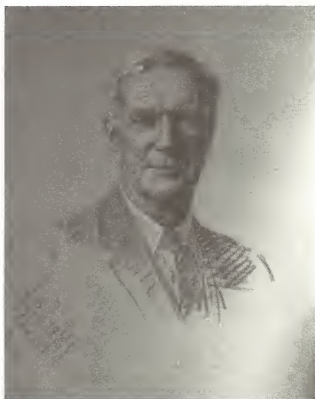
*Studio, 501 Yale Art Gallery  
ca. 1971*

The working drawings of Deane Keller were kept in portfolios in the studio on the Yale campus. They remained unsigned since they were intended solely to serve in the creation of a painting. As such they are a record of a moment, the interface of intention and decision, wherein draftsman and subject begin their work in the studio.

"The most intimate expressions in all art", Keller writes in his *Notes on Drawing, Painting, and Composition*, "have probably come from flashes of brilliant drawing on the spot, momentary, ephemeral — a quick, incisive, pungent, nervous digging and applying of the pencil, charcoal, whatever — and the finished drawing carefully wrought".

Among these working drawings are head and hand studies, drapery studies, composition studies, anatomical pages, informal gesture and memory studies, copies from Master drawings, and drawings from the model. Many of the portrait drawings are supplemented with notations at the margins either in criticism of the shape of a feature or general proportion, or with observations regarding something of the character of the sitter.

While Keller received numerous commissions for portrait drawings, most of the drawings on exhibition were done solely to assist him in painting. A complete record of these works would be difficult to reconstruct since they were often given away, used in instruction, or have otherwise disappeared. Those drawings which remain record the search for form and construction appropriate to each subject while at the same time they betray the intensity of the search, the act of drawing itself.



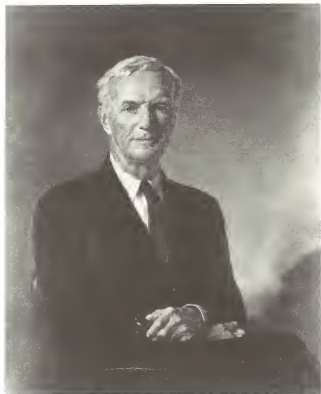
*Study for Barclay Robinson. 1967.*

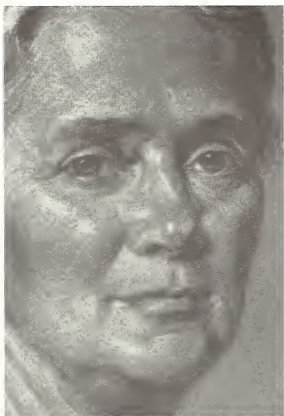
*Charcoal.*

*Barclay Robinson. 1967.*

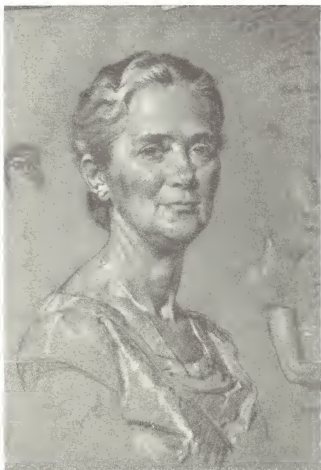
*Oil on canvas.*

*Collection of Hartford Hospital.*





*Study (detail) for Mrs. James Horsfall.*  
*Charcoal.*  
*Mrs. James Horsfall. 1967.*



"I was lucky enough to be one of Deane Keller's contemporaries at the American Academy in Rome. We were friends at once, and during the three years that we spent in Rome together that friendship continued to grow. We shared the same interests. Deane loved Italy, its people and their language. But above all he had a deep perception of the attitude of the Italian old masters toward their work. I envied him his own mastery of draftsmanship which seemed to stem from the study and understanding of the great works of art that surrounded us. It was a revelation to be with him in the contemplation of them. His zeal was an incentive to me for which I have never ceased to be grateful.

"In Deane Keller's portraits there is a quality beyond anything that can be produced by mere accurate drawing and accomplished painting. It is an insight into the sitter's character that expresses itself unconsciously, quite independent of the will of the artist, and is the mark of the work of true portraitists."

Walker Hancock



*Patricia Ryan, 1932.*  
*Charcoal.*



*Dean Annie W. Goodrich, 1935.*  
*Charcoal.*



*John Davenport, 1936.*  
*Charcoal.*





*Dr. Thomas Forbes. 1973.  
Charcoal.*

*Captain John Moore. 1960.  
Charcoal.*

*Head Study. ca. 1953.  
Charcoal.*



*Hand study.*

*Charcoal.*

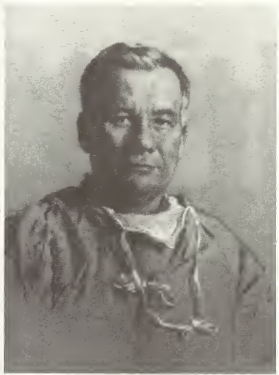
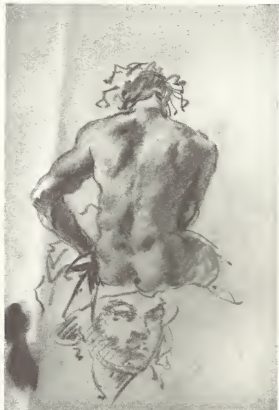
*Drapery study for Prix de Rome painting,  
"THE GENIUS OF MEDICINE". 1926. Charcoal.*

*Study from Giovanni Battista Tiepolo (1696-1770).*

*Charcoal pencil.*

*Margaret Dae. Charcoal.*

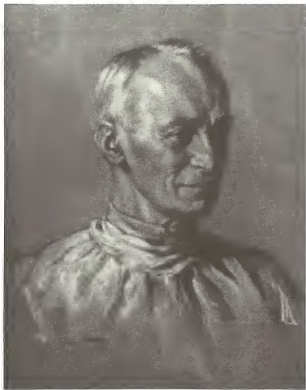
*Collection of Dorothy Archibald.*



*Study from Giovanni Battista Tiepolo.  
Charcoal pencil.*

*Drapery study. Charcoal.*

*Dr. William W. L. Glenn. 1965  
Charcoal.  
Collection of Glenn family.*



*Dr. Harvey Cushing. 1939.  
Charcoal.  
Collection Yale University Art Gallery.  
Gift of the Harvey Cushing Society.*

*Senator Robert A. Taft. 1955.  
Oil on canvas.  
Collection the Taft School.*





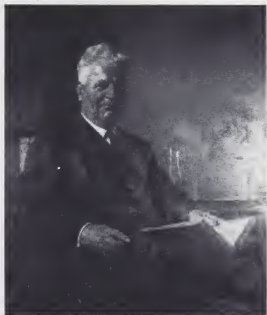
*Albert Galloway Keller. 1952.  
Father of the Artist.  
Charcoal.*



*Deane Keller in the studio;  
on easel, Rudolph F. Zallinger.*



*Deane Keller in the studio.  
Portrait of Kingman Breuster, Jr. 1974.  
Oil on canvas.  
Collection of Breuster family.*



*"The most richly represented painter in the Yale collection is neither Abbey nor Trumbull (excluding the miniatures), but is rather Deane Keller, who has been virtually the official painter to the Yale family since he earned his fine arts degree under Dean Meeks in 1925. We record his seventy-eight paintings with pride, for they portray many of the best loved Yale men and women of the past half-century. Through the works of Keller no less than more innovative painters, the Yale campus had been enriched: the Art Gallery, the schools of Law, Medicine, and Divinity, the Gym, the dining halls, the masters' houses — all bouse our paintings, which represent our history and which honor many of the individuals who have best served the University."*

Theodore E. Stebbins, Jr. in *American Paintings at Yale University*, 1982

Professor Thomas G. Bergin. 1964.  
Oil on canvas.  
Collection Yale University. Art Gallery.

Robert J. H. Kipphut mural ca. 1964.  
Oil on canvas.  
Collection Yale University.



*"... As far as a serious school in Florence is concerned I would advise Signorina Nerina Simi, via Tripoli 1. It is a question of a private school, very much in the traditional sense, the only one I know.*

*"If your boy should decide to go there I would be more than happy any time I'm in Florence, to follow him from time to time in his studies and to advise him as best I can.*

*"By the way, I know another serious teacher, and that, dear Keller, is you!"*

from a letter from Pietro Annigoni

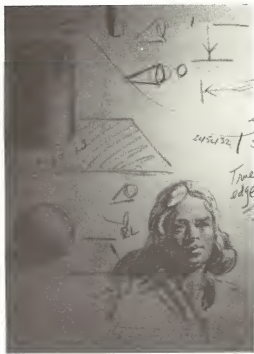


As a teacher of figure drawing, Deane Keller continued in the tradition of George Bridgman. Students were urged to draw the whole figure at once, complete if abbreviated, with attention given to the action, rhythms, and proportion. Should this first and most important stage gain approval, then, often after major or minor revisions, the modeling of the forms was undertaken. Criticism was given at least twice a week, and it was rigorous. No criticism was offered, however, without a demonstration of the solution.

"Teachers of drawing, painting, and composition are no good", Keller wrote in his *Notes*, "if they cannot demonstrate what they have in mind."

"For centuries drawing and painting instructors have been the catalysts between undisciplined creativity and the professionalism of "Master," Charles Ferguson notes in a catalogue on an exhibition of Keller's drawings at the New Britain Museum of American Art in 1981. "Italian 15th and 16th century Renaissance apprenticeships developed some of the world's most technically able artists, painters, architects, and sculptors. The 18th century American, Benjamin West, in his London studio, taught scores of young, ambitious but untutored would-be-artists from America. Several Peales, Ralph Earl, Gilbert Stuart and others were trained by West and enabled to survive with their art in the new world.

"Deane Keller is one of those giants among drawing instructors. His standards of excellence prepared hundreds of his students not only to prosper but to become leaders in their fields ...."



*Demonstration sheet.  
Charcoal pencil.*

## VITA

- 1901 Born December 14, New Haven, Connecticut
- 1922-24 Art Student's League, New York; study with George Bridgman
- 1923 Yale University, B.A.
- 1923-26 Yale School of Fine Arts; B.F.A. 1926
- 1926-29 Fellow, American Academy in Rome
- 1929-36 Assistant Professor of Drawing and Painting, Yale University
- 1936-48 Associate Professor of Drawing and Painting, Yale University
- 1943-45 Allied Military Government, Fifth Army; Chief of Fine Arts and Monuments Division, Tuscany; responsible for identification and transport of works of art valued at \$500,000,000. Decorated: Legion of Merit (USA), Army Commendation Ribbon, Order of the British Empire (MBE), Crown of Italy Partisan Medal, Order of Saint John Lateran (the Vatican), medal of the Opera (Pisa) in recognition for restoration work on the Camposanto.
- 1948 Professor of Drawing and Painting, Yale University
- 1957 Portrait of Senator Robert A. Taft; Senate Reception Room, The Capitol, Washington, D.C.
- 1970 Retirement from Yale
- 1977 Yale School of Fine Arts First Distinguished Alumnus Award and Exhibition
- 1992 † April 12, Hamden, Connecticut

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June, 1953

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*Marshall Bartbolomew. 1953  
Oil on canvas.  
Collection Yale University.*

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